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PSYCHIATRY.

By Isador H. Coriat, M. D.

RECENT LITERATURE ON PARAMNESIA.

Paramnesia, whether of the simple or reduplicative variety, has recently received a remarkable impetus, both in studies of the phenomena in normal individuals and its occurrences in various psychopathic states, psychasthenias and mental disorders. Recent text books, however, have given it but scant notice, but the current literature is rich in the reports of cases and the formulation of various theories. It bears a certain analogy to those peculiar losses of the feeling of reality, which are transient alterations in the feeling of recognition (or the so-called "sense of familiarity") or, on the other hand, to the feelings of "strangeness," the phenomena of the "never seen" as opposed to the sense of the "already seen" called by Janet, psycholeptic crises. The purpose of this brief review is to gather together and summarize the recent literature on the subject.

Outside of the strictly scientific contributions on the subject, the late Lafcadio Hearn, in a popular vein, describes the phenomena of paramnesia with a rare philosophic insight. (*Kokoro, Hints and Echoes of Japanese Inner Life*—Boston, 1896.) In discussing Shintoism and Buddhism, he raises the question whether the ego is the concentrated sum of the creative thinking of previous lives, and then adds—"To the same psychological category possibly belongs likewise a peculiar feeling which troubled men's minds long before the time of Cicero, and troubles them even more betimes in our own generation,—the feeling of having already seen a place really visited for the first time. Some strange air of familiarity about the streets of a foreign town, or the forms of a foreign landscape, comes to the mind with a sort of soft, weird shock and leaves one vainly ransacking memory for interpretations."

Grasset (*La Sensation du 'Déjà vu.'* *Journal de Psychologie normale et pathologique*, Jan.-Feb., 1904), again essays to apply his geometrical polygonal scheme, to an explanation of these complex phenomena. He asserts that there are two equally essential elements:

1. The recognition of an image, of an emotion, of a psychic state, that one has the consciousness of never experiencing.

2. The ignorance of the origin of the first impression (visual or auditory image), and emotion previously acquired by the "psychisme." In the second case it is necessary that there be in the "psychisme" of the subject an image or an impression, which shares in it, which has been deposited or formed unknown to the subject. The patient shows a stupefying anxiety, when he ascertains the presence in his mind of an image or a precise impression, whereof he is unable to say when or how it came into his brain. Perhaps unconsciously or unknown to him, he acquires this psychic recognition, which he is able to later utilize in different conscious intellectual operations, without even recalling either the moment or the circumstances of the acquisition of this psychic recognition. The phenomenon is explained by double "psychisme" and the necessary separation of psychic centres, either superior or inferior (the polygonal schema); the superior being conscious, while the inferior is unconscious or subconscious. The two centres collaborate in an inextricable manner, but they are also able, in certain psychological or extra-physiological conditions, to disaggregate and functionate alone (*disagrégation subpolygonale*). In these states of subpolygonal disaggregation, the inferior psychic states are able to acquire diverse impressions, without the knowledge of the

superior psychic centres. The sensation of the "already seen" is not an illusion of false recollection of an impression whereof the subject ignores the first copy. In support of his theory, he quotes a letter from Paul Bourget who describes the characteristic "anguish" caused by the "already seen," but which became less as his mental powers matured. In the treatment of these conditions the patient must be taught to correct the impressions of the "already seen."

Léon-Kindberg has shown (*Revue de Psychiatrie et de Psychologie Experimentale*, Vol. VII, No. 4, April, 1903) that in cases of paramnesia the memory is very specific; the pose, expression, gestures, all being fully recognized as having taken place before. The phenomena may also occur only under conditions of fatigue, cerebral neurasthenia. The accompanying feeling is either curiosity, indifference, amusement or fear. Paramnesia may be an epileptic aura, and then is often associated with vertigo. In one tenth of the cases there is a feeling of depersonalization. After discussing in detail the various theories of paramnesia, the author undertakes to explain the phenomena on a rational basis. He concludes that the perception of reality requires a certain mental effort, an effort of synthesis, and, as this is absent in patients who are the subject of a paramnesic memory disorder, the environment is perceived with the same facility as a memory not requiring synthesis, and there arises the illusion that it is a memory, that the present has been perceived before.

G. Ballet (*Un cas de "Fausse Reconnaissance" ou de "Déjà vu."* *Rev. Neurol.*, 1904, pp. 1221-1223) reports a case in whom the paramnesia followed an epileptic delirious state, the phenomenon being immediate and instantaneous, and of an auditory, visual, tactile and gustatory type. He believes that the disorder was produced by a transitory or permanent psychasthenic state, and is of the nature of an instantaneous dissociation.

Lemaitre (*Des Phénomènes de Paramnesie à propos d'un cas special.* *Archives de Psychologie*, Vol. III, pp. 101-110, Nov., 1903) gives the case of a young man of sixteen, with peculiar dreamy states, in whom things dreamt, seemed to come to reality a few days later. His explanation of the phenomenon is that the paramnesia consists of conscious revival of recent subconscious perceptions, but which, by reason of their subliminal modality, appear to the consciousness as having occurred a long time previously.

Heymanns (*Eine Enquête über Depersonalisation und "Fausse Reconnaissance"* *Zeit. f. Psychol. und Physiol. d. Sinnesorgane*, Bd. 36, H. 5-6, 1904) carried out an investigation on forty-five students, of whom ten were women. The ages ranged between 20 and 25 years. Those in whom the paramnesia occurred were strongly emotional, changeable in morals, inapt and irregular in their work. The paramnesic had an inaptitude for mathematics, while the non-paramnesic showed an inaptitude for languages. In connection with this, it is of interest to note that Lemaitre's patient showed a taste for literature and the fine arts, but manifested a profound aversion for mathematics. The paramnesic is liable to the momentary experience that a familiar word is strange or meaningless. The most frequent time for the phenomenon to appear was in the evening when the subject is in a passive condition, tired, exhausted or engaged in uncongenial work.

Sidis (*Multiple Personality*, 1904) explains the phenomena of paramnesia on the principle of reverse movements, when subconscious experiences transmitted to central consciousness appear under the form of "familiar memories." He cites the well known example of the proof reader. Recently a new variety of the disorder known as "reduplicative paramnesia" has been described by Pick and Coriat

This is characterized in that a series of events in the patient's remembrance falls into manifold occurrences, the isolated events being impressed on the patient as repetitions thereof. It is distinct from multiple personality, in that the patient does not lose the sensation of his own ego. The published cases are reported very minutely, as the patients were all inmates of insane hospitals, so that an opportunity was presented to follow the disorder from day to day. So far, it has been found to occur only in various psychoses, general paralysis, delirium tremens, involution melancholia, dementia praecox, alcoholic deterioration, Korsakow's disease and senile dementia (presbyophenia). Normal individuals appear to be exempt. Characteristic of the disorder is a lengthening of the time sense, while the sense of familiarity is greatly intensified.

La Démence Précoce, par R. MASSELON. O. Joannin et Cie, Paris, 1904. pp. 199.

The interest in the deteriorating psychoses of puberty and adolescence is well shown by the multiplicity of publications on the subject. Masselon has given us a very readable and lucid exposition of the modern ideas of dementia praecox, and outside of Christian's classic monograph, published in 1899, we can recall nothing so complete on the subject. The book is divided into six chapters and deals with the history, symptomatology, prognosis, etiology and pathological anatomy of the disease. There are several illustrations showing katatonic and paranoid attitudes, and three plates illustrating the handwriting, with special reference to the stereotypy, poverty and scattering of thought. The author is the strongest however in the section devoted to the psychology of the disease, and here are seen the evolution and the summing up of his experimental work along this line, published in 1902 (*La Psychologie des Déments Précoces*). In summing up the psychical disorders of dementia praecox, we find the following striking traits:—emotional indifference, progressive diminution of voluntary and intellectual activity, lack of capacity of mental effort, progressive disappearance of complex memories with automatic preservation of simple memories, lack of precision and diminution in the number of mental images, fixation of certain ideas which are reproduced automatically. These symptoms were most marked in the katatonic form, appear early in the "neurasthenic" period of the disease, are accentuated, but finally narrow down in the acute period, but are still present in the terminal dementia.

Ten Lectures on the Biochemistry of Muscle and Nerve, by W. D. HALLIBURTON. P. Blakiston's Son & Co., Philadelphia, 1904. pp. 160.

This book comprises the Herter lectures given in New York in 1903, on the chemical physiology and pathology of muscle and nerve tissue. Like all of the author's publications, it is based on sound laboratory experiment and the conclusions are most convincing. The material throws much light on pathological anatomy and on the muscle contraction and nerve conduction theories of physiological psychology.

On the Methods of Later Psychiatry, by C. B. FARRAR. *Am. Jour. of Insanity*, Jan., 1905.

A comprehensive and readable summary of the recent advances in psychiatry, from the standpoint of pathological anatomy, physiological psychology and clinical psychiatry. Particularly well given is the summary of the work of Aschaffenburg on associations and of the chief criteria furnished by Kraepelin and his school on mental capacity and fatigue.